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TRUTH ABOUT POWER IS SPOKEN HERE
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ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

Local activists sued for protesting development firm

by Wally Cuddeford

A campaign by local activists to defend anti-racist values and enforce ethical standards in local business has garnered a stern response from one targeted offender: local development firm Lorig Associates. For months now, Seattle Solidarity Network ("SeaSol"), alongside former Lorig employee and woman-of-color Patricia Milton, have been engaged in an aggressive grassroots campaign against Lorig's racist employment practices. And recently, after a couple apparent SeaSol victories, Lorig responded by filing a lawsuit against SeaSol and Patricia, seeking not only unspecified damages, but also a gag order prohibiting SeaSol and Patricia from saying or doing anything which could "interfere with Lorig's relationships with investors, customers or other employees."

This campaign started when Patricia, a former Lorig employee, saw a SeaSol flyer offering community members help with struggles against unjust employers or landlords. Patricia had just been forced out of Lorig after working there for nine years. During her tenure, she heard disparaging racist comments from co-workers in the workplace, and even once received a racist message on the office e-mail. At the same time, she was repeatedly overlooked for promotion or advancement, despite having all the necessary skills. Eventually, Patricia put two-and-two together, and noticed a distinct lack of other people-of-color in Lorig's employ. (The only other person-of-color employee was the janitor.) She was eventually granted a "trial run" at a higher paid position, until being directed to train the white person brought on to replace her. In the end, she was told she could choose between a pay cut, or a job loss. She refused a pay cut, and was terminated. (For the full story about Patricia Milton's struggle, see last month's issue of *Works In Progress*, or visit www.seattlesolidarity.net.)

> For months now, Seattle Solidarity Network, alongside former Lorig employee Patricia Milton, have engaged in an aggressive grassroots campaign against Lorig's racist employment practices.

SeaSol worked with Patricia to develop a strategy for confronting Lorig about their racist employment practices. Together, they produced a letter of clearly articulated demands, including that Lorig give Patricia back pay from her unjust firing. When the delivery of this letter yielded no results, the group escalated tactics, and began picketing outside of properties Lorig had available for rent. Furthermore, when the group learned of Lorig's bid on two major construction projects, one in Olympia and one in Newcastle, they organized pickets at city council meetings in both cities to bring awareness to Lorig's racist practices. Eventually, Lorig's bids were turned down in both cases.

SeaSol has had success with similar campaigns. Recently, a local landlord attempted to evict a military family from their home over a paperwork technicality. (One partner was required to sign a form, but was unable to do so as he was in Iraq.) The couple saw a SeaSol flyer, and called them. Thanks to SeaSol, the couple now has a mutual termination agreement with the renter, allowing the family to stay long enough to find a new home. Additionally, an active SeaSol member was in a fight with her ex-landlord who was trying to avoid returning a refundable deposit, that is, until SeaSol forced the issue.

However, in their campaign against Lorig, SeaSol may be in for a long fight. Rather than give Patricia the back pay she deserves as a result of her unjust firing, they have filed a civil suit in King County Superior Court against both Patricia Milton and the members of SeaSol (many of whom they could not name, and listed as "John/Jane Does #1-20"). In the suit, Lorig paints itself as a "small" local business (a small local business that just happens to be seeking multi-million dollar construction bids) which has no recourse but litigation. The suit seeks unspecified damages against Patricia and SeaSol for "impairing Lorig's goodwill and reputation" with what they call "false, misleading [and] disparaging statements about Lorig." Furthermore, Lorig sought a temporary restraining order (or "TRO") against both Patricia and SeaSol. If granted, this would have prohibited either Patricia or SeaSol from picketing or campaigning against Lorig, or from even speaking negatively about Lorig at any time,

▸ **LORIG,** continued on page 6

"It is time for us to put an end to this occupation"

A Palestinian man's account of the battle for Nilin village

by Hassan Mousa and Jody McIntyre

Situated just west of Ramallah, the Palestinian village of Nilin has lost huge swathes of land to Israel's settlements and its wall in the occupied West Bank. In a year and a half of resisting construction of the wall, five villagers have been murdered by the Israeli military while demonstrating. Hassan Mousa is a coordinator of the Nilin Popular Committee Against the Wall and Settlements and the uncle of Ahmed Mousa, an 11-year-old boy who was the first villager from Nilin to be killed by the Israeli army.

The following is Hassan Mousa's story as told to The Electronic Intifada contributor Jody McIntyre:

On 29 July 2008, while the apartheid wall was still in the planning stages, there was an evening demonstration here in Nilin. We wanted to send a message to the Israeli settlers who were already living on and stealing our land, that this wall is being built at your request, so you must pressure your government to stop construction, and put an end to the suffering of the Palestinians living here. We knew that they were saying the wall was being built for security, but we believe that it is purely a land grab and an extension of the existing illegal settlements built on our land since 1967. So that was the message of the demonstration, that you can never have security while others are suffering.

> Our hope is that the model of nonviolent resistance practiced here in Nilin can spread across Palestine. The Israeli government does not want peace, so it is time for us to put an end to this occupation.

At the time, there was no real presence of soldiers, just a single jeep parked far away from the place of the demonstrators. When they suddenly heard the sound of the demonstration coming toward the planned site of the wall, the jeep drove up very close. The young people started moving the children and old people back toward the village, as they were understandably concerned for their well-being.

As my nephew Ahmed was walking back, his sandal slipped off his foot. He put his bag down to get it but the bullet was faster. According to eyewitnesses, three soldiers got out of the jeep; the first shot a sound bomb, the second shot a round of rubber-coated steel bullets, and the third shot directly at the head of my nephew with a live bullet. He was shot deliberately. The people nearby tried to rescue him -- they said that while they were carrying him toward the ambulance, pieces of his brain slipped down onto their shoulders. It was a serious experience for them ... they couldn't understand how brutal and savage the soldiers were to kill a ten-year-old child.

Ahmed died immediately, but the paramedics needed to wait until they arrived at the hospital for an official confirmation. When the news of his death came out in the media, the Israeli army announced that there had been a case of killing in Nilin, but that it had been a result of internal conflict between families in the village. They actually said that he was killed by another Palestinian!

The Palestinian Authority decided to conduct an autopsy, and it was found that he was killed by a live bullet. After that, the army admitted to killing him, but didn't bother to give a reason. We are in the process of taking the army to court now.

Ahmed was a very active person among his friends, and loved by all. He was helpful and obedient to his parents. He never harmed anybody. For me, he was my favorite nephew, and his parents knew that. I used to tell them not to shout at him, because he was so sweet. His death truly affected me, and I have his poster displayed in my house. But the image of Ahmed is in my heart.

> According to eye-witnesses, three soldiers got out of the jeep, and shot directly at the head of my nephew with a live bullet. He was shot deliberately.

Ahmed's mother was especially hurt by his loss. She was pregnant at the time. She already had four sons, and was hoping that God would bless her with a daughter. After the medical checkup she was told, "Congratulations, you will have a daughter." But after he died, she said "Oh God! I want a son so I can name him Ahmed." I told all the nurses in the town to be close to her after Ahmed's death so she could keep her baby. It was very difficult for her, and she would often faint, completely unaware of her surroundings. But thanks to the women around her, she managed to overcome the problems and give birth to a beautiful daughter.

The news came to his brothers as a huge shock, because they had been playing together in their uncle's house just an hour earlier. Ahmed told them he wanted to go home to take something from the fridge, left the house, and went toward the demonstration.

It was very difficult for his brothers. Sometimes they make a mistake and call one another Ahmed, because they are so familiar with his name. At first they couldn't enter his room. At night they would dream about him, and wake up in the morning to tell their father that they had seen Ahmed and he was happy.

Now that time has passed they have gotten used to the idea of his death, but they keep his pictures on the walls of their room and on the computer. If you go to his house, you feel as if Ahmed is still present. He was very dear to them.

At the funeral, I told the people that Ahmed's blood planted the seeds for thousands of people to follow in his footsteps, and more than a year and a half later, this has been proven. Four more have died since, because they decided to follow in his footsteps.

Killing Ahmed did not suppress our demonstrations, it made our demonstrations stronger. The Israeli army soon realized that the murder of Ahmed was a very basic mistake in Nilin.

The second martyr, Yousif Amira, was from the same neighborhood as Ahmed, and on the morning of Ahmed's funeral he asked the people, "If I am martyred, will you make a huge funeral for me as you did for Ahmed?" That same day he was killed near the entrance of Nilin. He spent three days brain-dead, and then died. We accomplished his wish of a huge funeral, with sweets thrown from rooftops as his body was carried through the streets.

The blood of Ahmed has aroused a patri-

▸ **NILIN VILLAGE,** continued on page 6

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a free, volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions
Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

We value well-researched pieces that cover news stories that would be informative to readers in the South Sound. We value news and analysis over opinion pieces. We value submissions on stories that are misrepresented or ignored by mainstream media.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number. Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress, *it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

Send submissions to *olywip@gmail* or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

Governing Tool
The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

WIP *will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by* WIP *to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but* WIP *reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

Mission Statement
"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. *Works In Progress* is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause
We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues
Some issues are held in the Timberland Library system. *WIP* is archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

WORKERS IN PROGRESS

Colby Batts	Teresa Jennings
Janet Blanding	Joshua Neuhouser
Dave Campbell	hali panneton
Marylea Coday	Sandia Slaby
Mike Coday	Sylvia Smith
Renee Cruickshank	Jeff Sowers
Wally Cuddeford	Pat Tassoni
Christian DesMarets	Ryan Tompkins
Brendan Funtek	Scott Yoos

Recently, the History Channel aired **The People Speak** -- the long awaited documentary film inspired by Howard Zinn's books *A People's History of the United States* and *Voices of a People's History of the United States*. Using dramatic and musical performances of the letters, diaries and speeches of everyday Americans, **The People Speak** gives voice to those who spoke up for equality, justice, and social change throughout US history. Narrated by Howard Zinn, **The People Speak** illustrates the relevance of these passionate historical moments to our society today and reminds us never to take liberty for granted. To watch the videos go to http://www.history.com/content/people-speak

WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline: January 22

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Foreclosures Panel Discussion

January 7th • 7 pm • 1113 Legion Way SE

(Knox Bldg at Avanti High School)

This event will provide information on the foreclosure crisis and how it is affecting us locally.

Speakers include:

- Vince Brown, lawyer
- Savvina Chowdhury, economics professor
- Representatives from the Olympia School District and the San Francisco-based Homes Not Jails

Childcare will be provided.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS

20 YEARS OF WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is preparing for its 20th anniversary issue this coming May in grand style. Look to this spring and beyond for related fundraisers, collaboration with other local alternative media and other fun stuff.

We're seeking all past authors and long-time readers of WIP to share your perspective of the paper with us. If you have frequently written for us, we would love to hear from you again soon. We would also love to have a graphic designer and website coordinator to work with us on the one-time project of releasing our 20th anniversary issue in print and online. Contact olywip@gmail.com to join us for this momentous event.

POWER Outage - Sign-making party and potluck

January 4, 5:30-7:30 p.m.,
First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE

POWER Outage is a monthly get-together in Olympia for POWER (Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights) and community members. It happens on the first Monday of every month and starts at 5:30 p.m., with a potluck followed by a meeting.

The legislative session starts January 11. Join us in making artful props and signs for demanding welfare and economic rights for parents and children. Bring a potluck dish to share, paints, boards, posters, props, and most of all-ideas!

POWER is an organization of low-income parents and allies advocating for a strong social safety net while working toward a world where children and caregiving are truly valued, and the devastation of poverty has been eradicated.

For more information, contact POWER at (360) 352-9716, or email welfarerights@riseup.net. Child care will be provided.

Ending Poverty, Creating Opportunity - People's Summit & March on the Capitol

Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 18
Capitol Theater, 206 5th Ave SE, downtown Olympia
8:45 am - Summit registration
11:30 am - March to the Capitol

In the tradition of social justice, join us at the People's Summit & March on the Capitol on MLK Day, Monday, January 18th. Now is the time to hold our elected officials accountable to the needs of the many, not just the wealthy.

We hope you can join us for this amazing day. Last year we brought over 500 low-income people to Olympia to remind their legislators that they're paying attention and they vote. Poverty must end! And it is the people living in poverty who are most affected and must be heard.

To register, contact POWER at (360) 352-9716, or email welfarerights@riseup.net.

Traditional vigil and nonviolent direct action at the gates of Bangor

Saturday, Jan 6, all day

Join us in honoring the memory of Martin Luther King Jr. by resisting Trident and working for the abolition of nuclear weapons. We must find an alternative to war!

Bring a sack lunch; snacks; refillable water bottle; umbrella/rain gear; warm, water-proof clothes; money for donations, buttons, stickers and t-shirts; materials for making signs; and a nonviolent, peaceful spirit.

For more information, contact Ground Zero Center for Non-Violent action at 360-930-8697, or email info@gzcenter.org.

Sea Level Rise: What Can We Expect?

Monday, January 11, 7-9 p.m.,
Olympia Center, 222 Columbia North

Join us for an opportunity to have a meaningful and informed dialogue with the City and discuss the changes needed in the Comprehensive Plan to address the anticipated impacts of climate disruption.

Guest speakers Andy Haub, City of Olympia Public Utilities, and Keith Staley, City of Olympia Planning Department, will present an overview of recently completed work on the various scenarios and potential impacts of sea level rise on downtown as well as the projected effects of climate disruption throughout the state.

Sponsored by Olympia Climate Action. www.groups.yahoo.com/group/OlyClimateAction.

Partners in Prevention Education

Every Wednesday, 6-7 p.m.,
Java Flow, 207 Washington St. NE, downtown Oly

Partners in Prevention Education holds a meeting every Wednesday night from 6-7 pm for youth who identify as being members of the homeless community in Thurston County. Youth Group activities range from brief presentations about sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse, as well as discussions and the development of projects aimed at increasing community awareness of these social issues and impacting the attitudes, values, norms and commonly held beliefs that support these crimes.

If you are interested in attending this group, feel free to drop by the Java Flow coffee shop on Wednesday nights at 6 p.m. We are also looking for volunteers to provide food for this meeting. If you are interested, please contact Steve at (360) 357-4472.

Anarchist Planning for Twenty-First Century Economies: A Proposal by Robin Hahnel

Friday, Jan 8, 7 p.m.,
Last Word Books, 211 E. 4th Ave, downtown Olympia

Author, radical economist and political activist Robin Hahnel is coming to Olympia. He will be speaking at the Evergreen State College on the 8th of January for the Political Economy and Social Movements class, then he'll head down to our quaint, little radical bookstore to talk about 21st Century economics and the need to develop alternative economic structures in the face of rampant capitalism.

Hahnel is the author of several books, including "Economic Justice and Democracy," and has worked extensively with Michael Albert, author of "Parecon," developing the concepts and theories of participatory economics.

If you have any questions or need directions call the shop at (360) 786-9673, or email us at lastwordbooks@gmail.com. Hope to see you there.

Washington State Green Party Convention

Saturday, January 30,
Trinity United Methodist Church in Ballard

The Green Party of Washington State has called a convention for Saturday, January 30, at the Trinity United Methodist Church in Ballard (Seattle). Free, donations accepted. Bring your own lunch.

Will we continue to have a Green Party in Washington State? If we do, what role will the state party play relative to elections? Relative to locals?

To join some other committed party members and discuss this and other big issues, call Janet, 352-0779, to form a carpool.

Disaster help available for homeowners in Thurston County

Winter floods and winds are here. If past years are any indication, Western Washington will experience one or more declared disasters that will put homeowners in need of short- and long-term housing assistance.

While short-term disaster needs often are met through government agencies, non-profit and faith-based organizations, assistance with the long-term needs of many, especially the vulnerable elderly and low-income, is slow to come, if it is available at all.

That's where the Thurston County Long Term Recovery Organization (LTRO) can step in. The LTRO is a non-profit organization that, in the event of a declared disaster, helps homeowners who need assistance in putting their homes, lives and communities back together when other help is exhausted.

The LTRO, which works in all areas of Thurston County, has a professional case worker who advocates for those struggling to recover. For example, in 2009, the organization assisted a family in cutting trees that were threatening their home and barn after being undermined by unexpected floodwaters from a fierce winter storm.

This non-profit organization accepts monetary donations and trains, manages and supervises volunteer labor in rebuilding efforts.

For more information, visit www.rebuildthurston.org, or contact Angel Ray, Thurston County LTRO Case Manager at (360) 561-6938.

Thurston County is number one in the state in foreclosures

By Greater Olympia Foreclosure and Eviction Resistance

An awareness of the high numbers of foreclosures, due to the current economic crisis, overarches our society. Whether this awareness is spurred from media coverage, from foreclosures on the homes of friends and acquaintances, or from personal experience, it is a strong force that will only build as the number of foreclosed homes continues to rise rapidly. According to RealtyTrac data, 33 percent more Washington homes were foreclosed in the third quarter of 2009 as compared to the third quarter of 2008. Of 3,288 November foreclosures filed in Washington, 890 of these homes were in Thurston County. That is over one-quarter of all foreclosures in Washington. Olympia has the most foreclosures of any town in Thurston County.

The implications of this continuing trend shake the lives of individuals, families, and our community as a whole. We cannot be so sure that all of those whose homes have been foreclosed have other housing options. Renters cannot be so sure that their landlords are on stable financial terms, and are left to wonder if next month they might be evicted.

Is housing a human right? According to Article Twenty-five of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is. Who enforces access to these rights? When human rights are challenged or denied, do individuals or communities have the right to defend them? When a bank initiates foreclosure on a home, which right takes precedent: the right of a corporation to profit or the right of a human being to housing? And if one prioritizes human rights over corporate profit, how can communities respond to threats to housing?

Minnesotan Rosemary Williams' story provides one contemporary example of community resistance to foreclosure. When Rosemary lost her job, it was only the beginning of her misfortunes. From sudden medical bills to the cost of helping her daughter through college, Rosemary needed money. She took out an adjustable-rate mortgage on her home. Like many Americans, Rosemary Williams only became aware of the consequences of such a mortgage when her monthly payment suddenly jumped from $1,200 to $2,200. The bank foreclosed on her last September, and she was required to leave her home by March 30, and with it her community of 55 years.

This could easily have been the end of the story, as it has been for most people struggling with foreclosure. However, Rosemary joined forces with the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign and Minnesota Coalition for a People's Bailout to challenge the injustice. With this support, Rosemary was able to stay in her home for an additional seven months during which two eviction attempts were foiled. She used her struggle as a platform to generate awareness and support for resisting foreclosure. As Rosemary Williams said as she left her home, "It's not over! We will keep fighting!" This sentiment is reflected in growing resistance nationwide, and represented here in Olympia by groups such as Greater Olympia Foreclosure and Eviction Resistance, or GOFER.

If you would like to learn more about these issues, GOFER is hosting a panel discussion on Jan. 7 at 7pm in the Knox building at Avanti High School with childcare provided free of charge. This event will provide information on the foreclosure crisis and how it is affecting us locally, and will also present ideas for how we can respond. Speakers will include local lawyer Vince Brown, Evergreen economics professor Savvina Chowdhury, representatives from the Olympia School District and Homes Not Jails. Homes Not Jails is a San Francisco-based organization that works to house the homeless in buildings that would otherwise be vacant. This event will kick off a local campaign to address the problem of foreclosures and evictions in our community. It will be followed by a series of monthly public meetings at the Olympia Library where people can learn more about these issues, access resources, build networks of support, and develop solutions.

Greater Olympia Foreclosure and Eviction Resistance is a community organization committed to assisting those dealing with foreclosure and eviction in Thurston County.

No more tax cuts for millionaires

Washington small business owners and family farmers call for a strong federal estate tax

By Jill Mangaliman

On Tuesday, Dec. 15, representatives from Washington Community Action Network and the Washington Small Business for Secure Health Care Coalition delivered an oversized letter signed by 200 small businesses and family farms and over 2000 petition signatures from community members to the office of Senator Maria Cantwell in Tacoma.

Family farmers, small business owners, and community members signed onto these letters, urging the Senator to not weaken or repeal the estate tax, but to maintain 2009 levels at the very least and continue to make much needed investments in public services and infrastructure during a time of recession. The gathering of support had been done within just four weeks.

Under the current 2009 levels, the federal estate tax only affects estates valued over $7 million for couples and $3.5 million for individuals. At these levels, only 110 small business and farm estates in the entire country would owe this tax yearly, and 99.8% of Americans would not owe any tax at all. In other words, 3 out of every 100,000 estates are small business or farm estates that would owe a modest tax on their transfer of wealth. Yet, we all reap the benefits – the federal estate tax helps support much needed investments in America's future including healthcare, good public schools and dependable infrastructure.

"My husband and I love farming our land, but since the economy began to bottom out two years ago, it's been difficult to keep the farm going. There have been a lot of foreclosures in the surrounding area. Critical federal agricultural aid and programs have helped us weather the storm – why would we support cutting funding?" said Lynda Korrord-Di Cicco, who owns Toboton Creek Farm in Yelm WA.

In 2001, Congress passed and President George W. Bush signed a package of tax cuts that included phasing out the estate tax completely in 2010. Now, all eyes are on the Senate who will have to vote on its fate before the year's end. The House has already voted to maintain the estate tax at 2009 levels permanently.

Jana Fulweiler, owner of a small doula business, tells us, "Investments that will strengthen our economy and help families get back on their feet cannot continue if we keep giving tax cuts to millionaires."

Jill Mangliman is a community organizer for Washington Community Action Network!, a statewide grassroots lobbying organization committed to the achievements of economic fairness and a decent quality of life for those who reside in Washington State.

Photos by Berd Whitlock

Works in Progress photojournalist Berd Whitlock was with a group of protesters at the Recruiting Office in West Olympia on December 15th. The endless wars of the USA continue now under the auspices of the Obama administration. Congress can't find the funds to reform our health care system, but there always seems to be money (or borrowed money) to fund wars - to purchase and deploy war materials around the world.

It's an inconvenient truth, and one that America's politicians and mainstream news media seem loathe to discuss. But there are some who regularly make and maintain fortunes based on the demand for the tools of war. In light of the proximity and contradiction between the White House's announcement of a surge in hostilities in Afghanistan, and the President's receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize, activists converged on *The Olympian* newspaper in order to draw attention to the important role that news media plays in enabling a system that allows some to actually profit (and profiteer) from the horrible violence of war.

The Fight for Universal Health Care Continues

Pro-Single-Payer Physicians Call for Defeat of Senate Health Bill

by Physicians for a National Health Program

A national organization of 17,000 physicians who favor a single-payer health care system called on the U.S. Senate today to defeat the health care legislation presently before it and to immediately consider the adoption of an expanded and improved Medicare-for-All program.

While noting that the Senate bill includes some "salutary provisions" like an expansion of Medicaid, increased funding for community clinics and the curbing of some of the worst practices of the private insurance industry, the group says the negatives in the bill outweigh the positives.

The negatives, the group says, include the individual mandate requiring that people buy private insurance policies, large government subsidies to private insurers, new restrictions on abortion, the unfair taxing of high-cost health plans, and cuts of $43 billion in Medicare payments to safety-net hospitals. Moreover, at least 23 million people will remain uninsured when the plan finally takes effect, they said.

"We have concluded that the Senate bill's passage would bring more harm than good," the group said in a statement signed by its president, Dr. Oliver Fein, and two co-founders, Drs. David Himmelstein and Steffie Woolhandler.

Addressing the Senate in an open letter, they write: "We ask that you defeat the bill currently under debate, and immediately move to consider the single-payer approach - an expanded and improved Medicare-for-All program - which prioritizes the advancement of our nation's health over the enhancement of private, profit-seeking interests."

The full statement appears below.

To the Members of the U.S. Senate:

It is with great sadness that we urge you to vote against the health care reform legislation now before you. As physicians, we are acutely aware of the unnecessary suffering that our nation's broken health care financing system inflicts on our patients. We make no common cause with the Republicans' obstructionist tactics or alarmist rhetoric. However, we have concluded that the Senate bill's passage would bring more harm than good.

We are fully cognizant of the salutary provisions included in the legislation, notably an expansion of Medicaid coverage, increased funds for community clinics and regulations to curtail some of private insurers' most egregious practices. Yet these are outweighed by its central provisions - particularly the individual mandate - that would reinforce private insurers' stranglehold on care. Those who dislike their current employer-sponsored coverage would be forced to keep it. Those without insurance would be forced to pay private insurers' inflated premiums, often for coverage so skimpy that serious illness would bankrupt them. And the $476 billion in new public funds for premium subsidies would all go to insurance firms, buttressing their financial and political power, and rendering future reform all the more difficult.

Some paint the Senate bill as a flawed first step to reform that will be improved over time, citing historical examples such as Social Security. But where Social Security established the nidus of a public institution that grew over time, the Senate bill proscribes any such new public institution. Instead, it channels vast new resources - including funds diverted from Medicare - into the very private insurers who caused today's health care crisis. Social Security's first step was not a mandate that payroll taxes which fund pensions be turned over to Goldman Sachs!

While the fortification of private insurers is the most malignant aspect of the bill, several other provisions threaten harm to vulnerable patients, including:

- The bill's anti-abortion provisions would restrict reproductive choice, compromising the health of women and adolescent girls.
- The new 40 percent tax on high-cost health plans - deceptively labeled a "Cadillac tax" - would hit many middle-income families. The costs of group insurance are driven largely by regional health costs and the demography of the covered group. Hence, the tax targets workers in firms that employ more women (whose costs of care are higher than men's), and older and sicker employees, particularly those in high-cost regions such as Maine and New York.
- The bill would drain $43 billion from Medicare payments to safety-net hospitals, threatening the care of the 23 million who will remain uninsured even if the bill works as planned. These threatened hospitals are also a key resource for emergency care, mental health care and other services that are unprofitable for hospitals under current payment regimes. In many communities, severely ill patients will be left with no place to go - a human rights abuse.
- The bill would leave hundreds of millions of Americans with inadequate insurance - an "actuarial value" as low as 60 percent of actual health costs. Predictably, as health costs continue to grow, more families will face co-payments and deductibles so high that they preclude adequate access to care. Such coverage is more akin to a hospital gown than to a warm winter coat.

Congress' capitulation to insurers - along with concessions to the pharmaceutical industry - fatally undermines the economic viability of reform. The bill would inflate the already crushing burden of insurance-related paperwork that currently siphons $400 billion from care annually. According to CMS' own projections, the bill will cause U.S. health costs to increase even more rapidly than presently, and budget neutrality is to be achieved by draining funds from Medicare and an accounting trick - front-loading the new revenues while delaying most new coverage until 2014. As homeowners seduced into balloon mortgages have learned, pushing costs off to the future is neither prudent nor sustainable.

We ask that you defeat the bill currently under debate, and immediately move to consider the single-payer approach - an expanded and improved Medicare-for-All program - which prioritizes the advancement of our nation's health over the enhancement of private, profit-seeking interests.

Physicians for a National Health Program is an organization of 17,000 doctors who advocate for single-payer national health insurance. To contact a physician-spokesperson near you, visit www.pnhp.org/stateactions or call (312) 782-6006.

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Is the notion of government as a force for public good being permanently destroyed?

by Martha Koester

Let's get into our Wayback Machine, and ask Sherman to set the date to June 23, 2005. That was when the Supreme Court handed down its decision in the Kelo v. City of New London case. For those who aren't into legal policy wonkery and don't recognize legal decisions by name, the case pitted small property owners against a city which took their property and handed it over to a large developer in the name of the public good. The little guys argued that eminent domain had traditionally been used only for specifically public purposes like the creation of roads, parks, airports and such. The city argued that the private development of beachfront property was an economic benefit to the public at large and could therefore be indirectly considered to be a public good. They won 5-4, with the "liberal" faction of the court providing the majority.

> Enacting health care "reform" as it stands right now will convince most that the government has completely given up any aspirations to providing public goods.

And this has quite a bit to do with the current debate on health care "reform." Read on.

On June 23, 2005, the blogosphere erupted in rage against this decision. The really interesting thing was that there was very little difference at all between the left and the right on that night. Both were close to being united in favor of the little guys, though a few on the left felt that since the "liberals" on the court were in favor of the developers, maybe we should at least consider their viewpoint.

For a reference point, consider Democratic Underground (DU) as a representative of the left blogosphere. There are links from there to Free Republic (FR), because some brave souls tolerate the sewage stench just to keep up with what the opposition is saying. The rage level was pretty much at the same pitch at both DU and FR, but as you might expect, the reasons behind the rage were very different. The FReepers, like most radical conservatives, hold feudalism as their ideal and advocate the utter destruction of the very notion of public goods. Any government action taken to further public goods is intrinsically evil to them. They are every bit as much against eminent domain for the sake of parks or libraries. They think of property owners as heroic small-time armed warlords, real he-men who prove it by shitting in the reservoir every time they get the chance.

The DUers, on the other hand were enraged that the public good was all of a sudden taken to be identical with some huge well-heeled private interest. They believe that the government ought to be defending little people, and in the business of directly providing, or at least overseeing the provision of, public goods that benefit the little guy. They thought it was an outrage that government should be acting on behalf of big corporate interests, thereby discrediting and undermining the notion of eminent domain in the provision of real public goods.

And now there are very similar arguments going on in the blogosphere about health care "reform." Conservative wingnuts hate any notion that the government should be involved in health care, which in their opinion should not in any way shape or form be considered a public good. They hate the idea of single payer, or even strict government oversight of health care, every bit as much as they hate the notion that the government should be an enforcer for private insurance. They hate anything that Obama is in favor of, simply because Obama is in favor of it. They'd hate "reform" even if the legislation proposed that insurance companies write them personal checks for $10,000 every year.

On the left we have people dismissed by so-called "pragmatists," as idealists who just ought to get with the program of government being an enforcer for the private insurance industry which is mainly responsible for our current health care mess. In return for taking single payer off the table, we were promised a public option available to anyone. Then that got stripped down to where almost no one would have been able to take advantage of it, then that got thrown out for early entry into Medicare for some, and now even that has been thrown out. There is nothing left but mandatory private insurance, sweetened by a few sops to the public interest, not a single one of which needs to be linked to mandatory private insurance in order to be enacted.

In 2005, very few on the left defended Kelo vs New London, but in 2009 we have many more people who consider themselves Democrats or progressives who are willing to defend government as an enforcer for unaccountable private interests which are far more powerful than a single developer. Maybe the sudden urge for submission to authority is enabled by Democratic majorities in Congress plus the presidency? Whatever the reason, Dems had better wake the hell up before they deliver the entire country to a really ugly right wing populist uprising. You think that Palin and teabagger rallies are scary now? You ain't seen nothin' yet. Enacting health care "reform" as it stands right now will permanently convince most of the non-politically active public that the government has completely given up any aspirations to providing public goods.

You probably all remember the recent story describing the IRS attack on a single mom earning $10/hour over the issue of Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) rebates. Seems that since she moved in with her mom, all of a sudden the IRS says that she can't possibly be supporting her family. Naturally it was the Bush administration that sicced the IRS onto EITC recipients, but what do you want to bet that the fake Republican populists won't be using this as a prime example of how the elitist "librul big gummint" is always oppressing the little guy. That tactic is working fine for them as they pose as the defenders of Medicare against gummint intrusion—never mind that they despise Medicare and would have eliminated it yesterday if they could.

What about this for a post-"reform" health care story? "Poor 55 year old Joe Blow, a diabetic who used to have a good job with good insurance, got laid off and can only find work for $10/hour. Pelosi and her Obamacare thugs made him buy basic coverage, but it doesn't cover his insulin—it's actually just catastrophic coverage. He can't pay for his insulin if he pays his premium, because even subsidies don't help when your premium is three times as much because of your age. He decided to go for the insulin, so now the big librul gummint IRS is after him taking 2.5% of his money. See what happens when you have gummint involved in health care?" You think the slimy fake populists won't spin it this way? They will, and everything will become the fault of Democrats.

The well-paid punditocracy has taken to

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calling single payer advocates who are furious at being forced into mandatory private insurance as "leftbaggers." Suddenly, it's 2005 again, with a few of our well-paid apologists for corporate power explaining ever so patiently to the rabble why being chained by law to murderers-by-spreadsheet is the only practical way we are ever going to get access to actual health care. Or maybe 1999, when they explained to the public how all the WTO protesters were really spoiled trustfundie professional protesters who refused to understand how "free" trade and outsourcing helped "the poor." (And those "poor" in developing countries who had been killed and maimed by their governments for protesting against the same things for the previous ten years? Non-existent, apparently.)

As in 2005 "leftbaggers" and teabaggers actually do have one thing in common—inchoate rage at being fucked over. The major difference between us and them is that we are high information and they are very low information. They don't know who is screwing them or why, and we have all the URLs that anyone could possibly want to explain corporatism. Sure, racism is a part of the teabagger thing—when has racism ever *not* been a part of right wing populism? But the main things that bug them are that underemployment is looking to be a permanent "new normal," and the government seems to be all about bank bailouts and now "messing around with their Medicare."

Where this is leading to is complete popular dismissal of any notion whatsoever of public goods guaranteed by government as even being desirable. Democrats in office over the past 15 years seem to have gotten us only telecoms and finance deregulation, welfare "reform," NAFTA, and now complete corporate dictatorship over health care. And on the horizon, there is a "commission" to investigate the "entitlements" of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Of course they will be looking for ways of expanding and improving these programs! (And I'm Marie of Romania.) Will we get to the point where there are no public goods at all, only rampaging right-wing populist militias in a Blade Runner society? Or will the administration and Congress get in back in touch with the real world as experienced by us peons?

The US Senate: A Diseased Body

by Democritus Blantayre

Somewhere I remember having read this phrase: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men ... are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It must have been from a bad joke.

Another bad joke is the latest Orwellian abomination spawned of the US "Democratic" Senate's autocratic conniving: "The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" (read: "The Patient Victimization and Unaffordable Care Act"). Here's how, according to the 150,000 member National Nurses United (the nation's largest union and professional organization of registered nurses in the US) and Uprising Radio, Americans in need of medicine can expect to be gouged in the future, should "our" "representatives" in the Senate get their way:

* No anti-trust stipulations
* New taxes on comprehensive health-care plans
* Less oversight for denials of care
* No wholesale or reimportation drug purchasing agreements...which keeps the costs of pharmaceuticals up, up, UP!
* New rules allowing health care insurers to overcharge seniors
* "Major loopholes in the insurance reforms that promise bans on exclusion for pre-existing conditions, and no cancellations for sickness"

Also, the status quo regarding privatized health care hasn't been changed at all. We're still the only industrialized nation in the world that doesn't have socialized medicine. *And* we have the worst health care coverage of all the western industrialized nations, with a ranking of 37th worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. Eat my dust, Slovenia! But at least the USA is #1 at something, according to a study by the University of Maine: "The United States has by far the most expensive health care system in the world, based on health expenditures per capita (per person), and on total expenditures as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP)." Yay!

And the extreme expensiveness of our health care system, afflicted as it is with the parasitic influence of assorted for-profit "health care" companies, will only get worse once the body politic inevitably swallows the Senate's snake oil to make these parasites grow ever larger. According to Trudy Lieberman (contributing editor to the Columbia Journalism Review who specializes in health care issues), health care costs for Americans are going to get much higher if the Senate gets its way. The Congressional Budget Office gives this less than optimistic estimate: "[A] family of four with a household income of $54,000 would be expected to pay 17 percent of their income, $9,000, on healthcare, exposing too many families to grave financial risk."

According to physician/politico Howard Dean (D-Vt): "It is not a coincidence ... that health insurance company stocks hit a fifty-two-year high on Friday [Dec. 18]" Yes, these stocks of the "health care" companies soared on the wings of vultures. "Stock prices of health insurance companies have been soaring since Oct. 27, when independent Senator Joe Lieberman announced that he would filibuster any healthcare reform bill that included a public option. Since then, the stock value of CIGNA has jumped 29 percent; Aetna, 27 percent; UnitedHealth, over 20 percent; and Humana, almost 14 percent. During that same period, the Dow Jones Industrial Average has risen by just over two percent." No wonder it drove Howard Dean to advocate for the outright killing of the bill.

But perhaps it's unfair to liken these companies to scavengers and parasites. Unfair to the scavengers and parasites, anyway. You see, these companies are more like *predators*.

From "How Health Lobbyists Influenced Reform Bill" by Andrew Zajac of the *Chicago Tribune*:

"An analysis of public documents by Northwestern University's Medill News Service in partnership with the Tribune Newspapers Washington Bureau and the Center for Responsive Politics found a revolving door between Capitol Hill staffers and lobbying jobs for companies with a stake in health care legislation.

"At least 166 former aides from the nine congressional leadership offices and five committees involved in shaping health overhaul legislation -- along with at least 13 former lawmakers -- registered to represent at least 338 health care clients since the beginning of last year, according to the analysis.

"Their health care clients spent $635 million on lobbying over the past two years, the study shows."

"Bob Edgar, president of Common Cause, a nonpartisan, nonprofit watchdog group ... blam[ed] 'a toxic cocktail of insiders and money' for short-circuiting a government-run plan that would have competed with private insurers.

"'We'll get a bill. And the president will sign it. But it'll be less than the country deserves,' said Edgar, a former six-term member of the House."

Here we go again. The "Democrats", the party which is supposed to represent the interests of the liberals and lower classes, have plunged yet another dagger into the backs of those latter groups immediately after the "health care" gangsters plunged their hundreds of millions into the vending machine government during this most stomach-churning mechanical movement of kakistocracy.

Yup. Turns out that the right of capital-L "Life" in "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" is alienable, provided there's an inadequate supply of money for those afflicted by disease.

That was the bad news about this legislation. Now here's the *really* bad news: As it turns out, **Americans currently without medical insurance will be required by law to purchase such.** Now the government will tell you what to buy, or else you'll pay set fines. Either way, this law will require you to PAY UP.

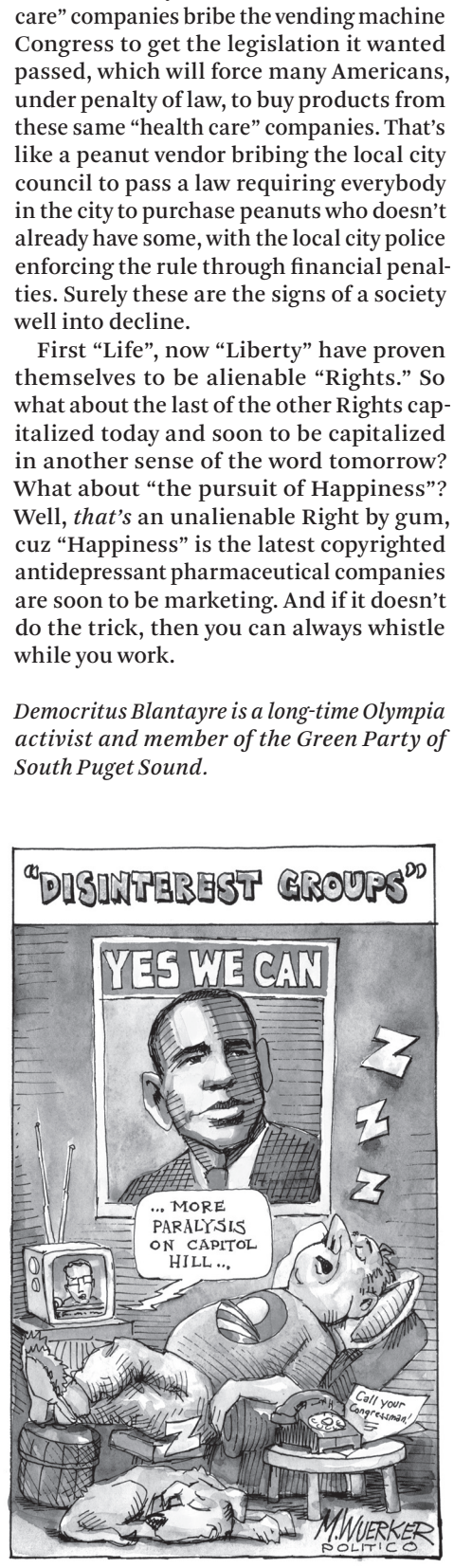
But wait a minute. In order to pay for the medical insurance or the fines, most likely, any given American citizen will have to work. Therefore the new proposed law is an indirect form of compulsory servitude for all uninsured Americans (which consists of those in the underclasses).

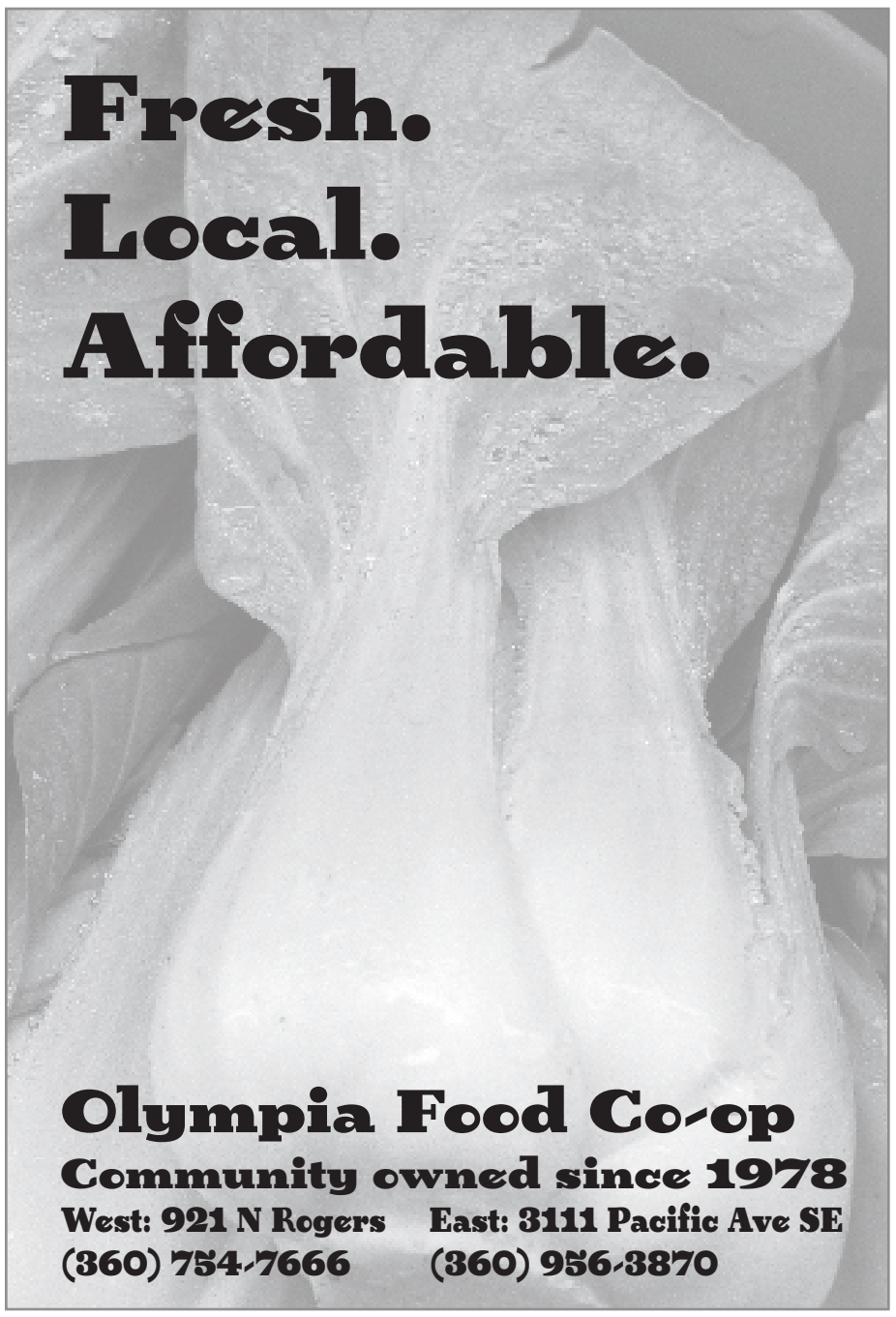
Here's a riddle for you: What sort of person is forced to work, but isn't in control of the wealth generated through their labor? I'll give you a hint: it rhymes with slave.

So in effect, you had a bunch of "health care" companies bribe the vending machine Congress to get the legislation it wanted passed, which will force many Americans, under penalty of law, to buy products from these same "health care" companies. That's like a peanut vendor bribing the local city council to pass a law requiring everybody in the city to purchase peanuts who doesn't already have some, with the local city police enforcing the rule through financial penalties. Surely these are the signs of a society well into decline.

First "Life", now "Liberty" have proven themselves to be alienable "Rights." So what about the last of the other Rights capitalized today and soon to be capitalized in another sense of the word tomorrow? What about "the pursuit of Happiness"? Well, *that's* an unalienable Right by gum, cuz "Happiness" is the latest copyrighted antidepressant pharmaceutical companies are soon to be marketing. And if it doesn't do the trick, then you can always whistle while you work.

Democritus Blantayre is a long-time Olympia activist and member of the Green Party of South Puget Sound.





Lorig v Milton et al: Details of the case

All legal briefs submitted thus far by Lorig and by SeaSol are available on the SeaSol website, www.seattlesolidarity.net.

Civil case against Patricia Milton

Lorig's primary argument is that Milton is bound by a severance agreement, which forbids Milton from saying anything negative about Lorig, no matter how true it may be.

Patricia has challenged the agreement on various grounds, including that she was never given the opportunity to confer with counsel. There is legal basis for invalidating such agreements, such as if they are found to be coerced. The validity of the agreement will be assessed at trial. However, if the agreement is found to be valid under the law, it is likely that Lorig would prevail over Patricia Milton, in which case the court would order Milton to pay unspecified damages to Lorig.

Civil case against SeaSol

Lorig accuses SeaSol of being Milton's "agents," and therefore bound by the same agreement as Milton. Lorig also provides that even if they aren't her "agents," they would still be liable for tortious interference. (In other words, *they* coerced *Milton* into violating her agreement).

In fact, this is a false dichotomy. SeaSol is acting as any concerned member of the community should when they hear of an injustice perpetrated by the powerful against the powerless. This does not make them anyone's "agent," and it certainly does not mean they are bound by any agreement they were never party to. Additionally, it is admitted by both sides that Milton approached SeaSol, not the other way around, meaning tortious interference does not apply.

While Lorig has claimed undue harm from SeaSol's activities, case law suggests SeaSol's speech is still protected:

"The First Amendment protects speech aimed at 'public criticism of [...] business practices [...]' and expressions intended to exercise a coercive impact on plaintiff."

"Speech does not lose its protected character simply because it may embarrass others or coerce them into action."

While the law forbids the spread of false facts (slander), calling a business "racist" is considered an *opinion* under the law.

SeaSol should win their case handily.

Temporary Restraining Order (TRO)

The overwhelming weight of case law supported Milton and SeaSol.

"No prior decisions support the claim that the interest of an individual in being free from public criticism of his business practices ... warrants use of the injunctive power of a court."

"Such prior restraints are presumed to be unconstitutional. [...] The presumption is based on the fact that prior restraints 'are the most serious and least tolerable infringement on First Amendment rights.'"

"The First Amendment does not tolerate even temporary suppression of speech that might ultimately be found to be protected."

Discovery

The court may compel Milton and SeaSol to provide "discovery" to Lorig, and vice versa. This means they would have to hand over everything they have that is relevant to the case for the other party to examine. This could even entail having to turn laptops and email passwords over to a third party, who would search for relevant communications. The defendants could, and likely would, appeal such a ruling.

Lorig initially asked this process be expedited, but the court denied that motion.

Trial

If this case is not dismissed by the court or withdrawn by Lorig, the result will be a civil trial involving all remaining parties. The estimated trial date would be May 2011.

Counter-claim

In accordance with RCW 4.24.510 (anti-SLAPP law), SeaSol has filed a counter-claim against Lorig for $10,000. If Lorig's suit fails, this counter-claim will likely succeed.

▸ **LORIG,** continued from page 1

under penalty of law.

The judge later denied the motion for a TRO. Really, there was little chance of it ever being granted. [See sidebar.] But in a way, that was never the point. The ploy was still advantageous for Lorig, because it's part of the overall strategy of a SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation). The objective of a SLAPP isn't so much to win, as it is to overwhelm the opponent with any combination of intimidation, fear, exhaustion, and/or legal expenses until they abandon their campaign. This strategy is evident both in Lorig's legal arguments, which (except in the case of Milton) are just enough to get by, and their inclusion of every identifiable and non-identifiable member of SeaSol in the suit, with no real attempt to connect any person (other than Milton) to any specific act or to justify their inclusion in the suit beyond membership in SeaSol at large.

While Lorig's strategy reveals their true attitudes toward accountability and community activism and participation, their legal briefs also reveal many troubling attitudes toward racism and civil liberties. One argument they present toward why it's illegal for people to picket outside their properties is:

"Defendants' speech regarding Lorig also fails constitutional protection because it violates the protection of the unwilling listener to avoid unwanted speech."

They cite case law relating to the rights of "captive listeners," without actually outlining how anyone witnessing the picket was in fact a "captive listener."

Furthermore, in oral arguments presented on Nov. 24 before Judge Laura Inveen in King County Superior Court, Nicholas Beermann, representing Lorig at the hearing, cited the severance agreement between Lorig and Patricia Milton, concluding:

"She has no First Amendment rights as far as we're concerned."

With regards to the standing allegations that Lorig engages in racist employment practices, Lorig suggests:

"The false and defamatory statements about Lorig are not matters of public concern and Defendants have no privilege to make such statements ..."

"Here, this court can assure itself that Defendants' false speech regarding Lorig is not constitutionally protected because it relates not to a matter of public concern at the 'heart of the First Amendment's protection' but a matter of private issue between Milton and Lorig."

First of all, it's dubious that speech is suddenly not protected when one party to the situation wants it to be kept private. But more importantly, decoded, this means "Once racism is discovered, it should be swept under the rug and not talked about." Lorig's position betrays a set of values that are contrary to honesty and accountability (and, thus, contrary to anti-racism). It suggests that racism is an individual act with individual consequences, rather than a systemic phenomenon with far-reaching consequences for society – consequences that concern all of us. This may be just one "small" development firm in one city, but that doesn't change the fact that racist behavior must be exposed whenever it's discovered, and challenged whenever it's exposed. People who embrace anti-racist values understand this, even when they're the ones on the hot seat.

Lorig's offensive position can be partially attributed to the fact that these are legal arguments. As we all should know, the court of law is no place for fairness, honesty, or true justice. However, their full position, as they themselves have presented it, tells us this goes beyond simple legal tactics.

Lorig is a business of racist policy. They have been identified as a racial discriminator by an ex-employee, who is supported by the facts. They rely on confidentiality agreements and gag orders instead of resolving allegations directly and honestly. And they attempt to bully anyone who takes a stand and says "Enough is enough."

The good news is, as long as Milton and SeaSol stick to their guns, Lorig's strategy is likely to backfire. First of all, Washington has anti-SLAPP laws, which not only protect the targets of SLAPP suits, but also grant damages to the tune of $10,000 to anyone targeted with a frivolous suit.

> These are matters that should be resolved on the basis of anti-racist values, not on the basis of who has deeper pockets.

Additionally, while SeaSol is receiving free representation from honest legal counsel, Lorig has hired notorious union-busting law firm Jackson Lewis to represent them. To understand who it is that Lorig is getting their legal advice from, here are excerpts from Jackson Lewis' own website:

"Jackson Lewis represents management exclusively in employment, labor, benefits and immigration law and related litigation."

"When complaints arise, we work with clients to take incisive action to effect solutions that minimize costs and maximize results. Whether we are counseling on legal compliance or litigating a complex case, we help our clients achieve their business goals and promote an issue-free [read: union-free] *work environment."*

"Guided by the principle that a positive work environment results in enhanced morale and increased productivity, the firm devotes a significant portion of its practice to management education and preventive programs. This approach helps limit exposure to grievances, charges and lawsuits."

What tends to happen in situations like this is, the dishonest corporate law firm tells its client, "Everything's going great. This'll work. We're gaining ground. Trust us." In the meantime, the client (Lorig) keeps deferring to the law firm's judgment (they're the experts, right?), while the law firm keeps collecting legal fees for a process that doesn't actually serve their client's best interests. The long-term result is that the corporate lawyers win big, in the form of hefty legal fees collected, and the activists win a nominal victory, having severely affected the bottom line of the offending business. The real loser, provided the activists stick to their guns and have the resources to survive the litigation onslaught, is the offending business.

When this is said and done, Lorig will have poured deep money into their legal representation (not to mention $10,000 in SLAPP fines if they lose), they will continue to lose out on big potential construction contracts, they will produce more bad publicity than the activists were capable of alone, and worse yet, the situation they faced when this all started – having an ex-employee accuse them of racist employment practices – won't have gone away. In fact, they will have made that situation even worse.

It is important to understand that this civil suit and the requested TRO target only those defendants listed in the court documents. Even if the TRO had been granted, it would still not be illegal for you or anyone else, other than those specific individuals listed in Lorig's lawsuit, to talk to your friends and coworkers about Lorig's racist hiring practices, or to write about such practices in print or on the Internet, or to tell people who are considering renting properties maintained by Lorig about Lorig's racist employment practices, or to tell the members of your city council not to accept any construction bids from Lorig.

Furthermore, it is imperative that we as a community do not allow such big-business bullying of volunteer activists to be successful. These are matters which should be resolved on the basis of anti-racist and anti-oppression values, not on the basis of who has deeper pockets with which to out-litigate the other. Because of all this, we not only can speak about Lorig's racist practices, we *should* speak out about them, until Patricia's demands are met, and until Lorig begins taking responsibility.

Wally Cuddeford is an antiwar activist and lifelong resident of Olympia, WA. He is also a veteran of the United States Navy.

▸ **NILIN VILLAGE,** continued from page 1

otic passion in Nilin and awareness that the wall is illegal and we must resist it. I believe that the killing of Ahmed will be the start of our victory in Nilin.

Almost 18 months after his death, the wall in Nilin is now complete. According to the Israeli military's plans, it was supposed to be completed within six months, but we succeeded in delaying construction for another six. In the past, we could get to the bulldozers that were digging on our land and stand in front of them. Sometimes we would get them to move back, sometimes the guys from the villages would break the bulldozers with stones and stop work for a long time.

At first, the wall was built as a mesh and barbed wire fence, but they soon realized that it was useless. Here in Nilin, we have a practical way of resisting the wall, so we would reach the fence and cut it in many parts every Friday. So, after the killing of Akil Srour in June of this year, the fifth person to be killed during our nonviolent demonstrations, the army decided that they would stop invading the town as they had done in the past. Before, we would find the soldiers waiting for us in the trees 300 to 400 meters away from the wall, just to stop us from getting there. Instead, they decided to change the wall from a fence to concrete blocks. Nilin became the first village in the West Bank to have these concrete blocks - the concrete version of the wall was previously built in the main population centers, but never before in a village.

Despite this, we managed to damage the concrete wall twice. The army was in a state of shock. What is happening here is unnatural. The people of Nilin are not ordinary, and that is because of the high price we have paid for our resistance, and the suffering we have seen. It is the Israeli army's aggression, and Israeli crimes, that makes the people more united and more determined to resist.

Now, they have tied all the concrete blocks together with a huge strip of iron and massive screws ... again, this is the first place this has happened. They don't want us to pull the wall down again, but I am sure the people are going to discover many miracles here. We will invent a way to damage the wall again.

Our hope is that the model of nonviolent resistance practiced here in Nilin can spread across Palestine. At the moment, we feel the massive presence of soldiers in Nilin, but if other villages and towns were having one demonstration per week, the number of soldiers would be distributed. The army would be in a state of confusion. We Palestinians have come to the conclusion that the Israeli government does not want peace, so it is time for us to put an end to this occupation.

Jody McIntyre is a journalist from the United Kingdom, currently living in the occupied West Bank village of Bilin. Jody has cerebral palsy, and travers in a wheelchair. He writes a blog for Ctrl.Art.Shift, entitled "Life on Wheels," which can be found at www.ctrlaltshift.co.uk. He can be reached at jody.mcintyre@gmail.com.

"It Is Time for the US to Stop Seeing Itself as a Donor and Start Recognizing Itself as a Polluter - a Polluter who Must Pay"

Amy Goodman interview with Vandana Shiva at the Copenhagen Climate Conference

Originally broadcast on Democracy Now

AMY GOODMAN: *On Sunday, I caught up with Vandana Shiva, world-renowned environmental leader and thinker from India, at Klimaforum, the People's Climate Summit, which is taking place across Copenhagen from the Bella Center, where the official talks are taking place. I asked Vandana Shiva for her assessment of President Obama and what he represents at the climate change talks.*

VANDANA SHIVA: I think President Obama represents a captive White House, captive to the industrial interests and the corporate interests of America. I would like to see President Obama represent Michelle's organic garden. But he doesn't bring the organic solution to Copenhagen. He brings, first and foremost, the juggling of figures, a reduction that will be of four percent, which is announced as a 16 percent reduction, but, even more, the juggling of politics, where, behind all this, he tries to say we don't need the UN treaty, we don't need to sign onto the Kyoto Protocol. During his elections, he talked a lot about joining the Kyoto Protocol. I think the most important thing President Obama could do would be sign the Kyoto Protocol and then shape it democratically.

GOODMAN: *What is your message to him as he comes this week to Copenhagen?*

SHIVA: My message to him is, do not destroy the international treaty; abide by it, and enlarge and deepen it. But do not dismantle it, because you will be dismantling the only legal framework the world has to make the polluters pay, to create a system in which we can start shifting from a fossil fuel-driven civilization to a renewable energy-driven civilization.

> "My message to Obama is, do not destroy the international treaty; abide by it, and enlarge and deepen it. It is the only legal framework the world has to make the polluters pay."

GOODMAN: *For those who debate in the United States, still the issue is, is global warming caused by human beings? What message do you have to them? Very concretely, the evidence of this around the world?*

SHIVA: I don't think we should talk about what's happening only as global warming. What's happening is climate instability, and it is threatening lives. I've just shown a film this morning of what climate instability is doing to peaceful communities of the Himalaya, who never use fossil fuels. But today their glaciers are disappearing. Today, instead of snow, they're getting rainfall that washes away their villages in flash floods. We have climate instability.

GOODMAN: *There is a big campaign here called "Hopenhagen." Among the corporate sponsors are Coca-Cola. Can you talk about the global effects of Coca-Cola?*

SHIVA: Yeah, my heart just sank, because when I got off the flight, the first thing I saw was a Coca-Cola bottle, "Hopenhagen." Well, if you've been to Plachimada, India, where 1.5 million liters were extracted by Coca-Cola every day, to make these soft drinks and to do the bottling of water. The women had to rise up against Coca-Cola. The women had to say, "Shut this plant down, because we are having to walk ten miles to get clean and safe water." That would not be Hopenhagen. The women of Plachimada would not see hope in a Coca-Cola bottle.

GOODMAN: *Where is Plachimada?*

SHIVA: Plachimada is a little village in Kerala where the women organized and shut down a Coca-Cola plant, and this triggered a movement across India. Three plants have been shut down. Coca-Cola does not bring hope, and Coca-Cola should not be the symbol of finding solutions for the climate crisis.

GOODMAN: *What is the effect of cli- mate disruption on cultures?*

SHIVA: The most important disruption of climate havoc on cultures is fear. Peaceful communities start becoming scared. For example, this year, as the monsoon failed in India, and its failure was much more extreme than normal droughts, farmers have waited to get a crop, and they haven't got a crop. They become afraid.

Beyond a point, as the water disappears, because your groundwater hasn't being recharged, your rivers and streams haven't been recharged, beyond a point, conflicts emerge in local communities, which is why the G-77 constantly refers to Darfur as linked to climate change with the disappearance of water from Lake Chad.

GOODMAN: *Explain.*

SHIVA: As the rainfall has failed in the sub-Saharan Africa, Lake Chad has shrunk. The communities that used to be supported in a very generous way by that lake are having less and less water. Pastoralists and settled agriculturalists have come in conflict. It so happens they belong to different religion. This has been presented as a religious conflict. It's really a conflict that emerges from climate change and climate change degradation of already degraded environments.

GOODMAN: *What is a climate refugee?*

SHIVA: A climate refugee is someone who has been uprooted from their home, from their livelihoods, because of climate instability. It could be people who've had to leave their agriculture because of extended drought. It could be communities in the Himalaya who are having to leave their villages, either because flash floods are washing out their villages or because streams are disappearing. We've just finished a participatory study that's showing that 70 percent of the water in my region of the Himalaya, from where the Ganges emerges has gone. The streams are dry. It could be a cyclone victim-30,000 one time, 100,000 one time. They never go back home. This number will continue to increase.

GOODMAN: *The US climate negotiator Jonathan Pershing said that the donor countries only have so much largesse. What is your response to that?*

SHIVA: I think it's time for the US to stop seeing itself as a donor and recognizing itself as a polluter, a polluter who must pay, a polluter who must pay compensation and pay their ecological debt. This is not about charity. This is about justice.

Vandana Shiva, speaking at the protests outside the Copenhagen Climate Conference

"This is what earth democracy looks like: the diversity, the integrity, the joy, the beauty. That's what we are going to build on. What's happening at COP15 is the death of democracy. It's an attempt to undo twenty years of work on a legally binding agreement. People are not in Copenhagen to bury the climate treaty; they are here to implement it, with an acceleration.

"To the governments who would like to cheat the world, cheat the earth, cheat their own people, like the Danish government, which comes with a mysterious text out of nowhere, or the United States government that is playing games with India and China to undo the international obligations, we want to tell you from before, when you arrive for your political service circus, we will not be supporting you. We will not be cheering you.

"We know we need climate action now. I come from the Himalaya. I just had an office in Delhi; I don't live in Delhi. It's a polluted city. The automobile has taken over. I come from the Himalaya. Our glaciers are melting. Our villages are getting flooded out or drying up. Agriculture is collapsing. Ninety percent of the food production in my area has collapsed in this year. Seventy percent of the streams have dried up. And that is not happening because of what the local people did. My journey in the environment movement began with Chipko, where women came out to hug the trees. We are now hugging our mountains and telling the polluters, 'You've got to stop polluting, because you are stealing our water, you are stealing our food, you are stealing our snows.' "

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OLY HIGH TIDE

Experience Olympia's highest tide of the Year on Monday, January 4, 8:15 am, by "The Kiss" on Percival Landing, corner of State St. and 4th Avenue. Bundle up and join members of the Olympia City Council and Thurston County Commission to experience a normal highest tide and contemplate the impact of sea level rise on downtown Olympia. Sponsored by Olympia Climate Action.

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Vandana Shiva at a potluck event during her recent visit to Olympia. Photo courtesy of Janine Gates Photography

"Free Trade" Continues to Terrorize El Salvador

Assassinations are only the latest

by Josh Elliot, Olympia CISPES

The third assassination of anti-mining/environmental organizers in the state of Cabañas claims the life of Dora 'Alicia' Recinos Sorto on Saturday, Dec. 26. This comes on the heels of the second assassination no more than a week ago in the same state of Cabañas in El Salvador. Both of these victims were involved in the Environmental Committee of Cabañas. This organization has been on the forefront of the anti-mining struggle and has been the target of intimidation and now multiple assassinations in the last year.

The people of Cabañas have been explicit in their plea to stop Pacific Rim Mining Co. from opening the El Dorado Gold Mine. The main reason being that the mine would decimate the largest source of El Salvador's drinking water, el Rio Lempa. This news has reached us, sadly, the morning of Sunday, Dec. 27, before the wounds of the previous murder had even begun to heal. Alicia, who was eight months pregnant, was walking home from doing laundry at the river near her home in Cantón Trinidad in the municipality of Sensuntepeque, Cabañas. Jason Wallach reports, "She was carrying one of her children in her arms as she was shot dead. The child was shot in the foot and is receiving medical care."

Sunday, Dec. 20 saw the second assassination of anti-mining activists in the state of Cabañas in El Salvador. Ramiro Rivera Gomez, vice president of the environmental committee of Cabañas was gunned down Sunday afternoon while walking with his thirteen year-old daughter. She was also injured but is in stable condition. Hector Berrios reported that Rivera was murdered by hit men carrying M-16's.

On Aug. 7, Ramiro Rivera Gomez had been shot eight times in another attempt on his life. Implicated in this shooting was Oscar Menjivar who has been known for terrorizing other members of the community who had been part of the anti-mining organizing throughout Cabañas. Community members say that Menjivar had been employed by Pacific Rim at one point, but Pacific Rim denies the claim. Menjivar was also implicated in the April 2008 attack of a farmer, Santos Rodriguez, where Rodriguez was attacked and had two fingers cut off by a machete.

The Salvadoran Ministry of Environment denied Pacific Rim, a Vancouver, B.C.-based mining company, the exploration permits needed to proceed with the El Dorado gold mine in Cabañas. The Canadian company is now in the process of a $77 million law suit against El Salvador using the Central American Free Trade Agreement to extort the people of El Salvador.

> This wave of violence that has befallen Cabañas has been linked time and again to Vancouver-based Pacific Rim.

It was June of 2009 when the first victim, Marcelo Rivera, was found tortured and murdered. Since then there have been attacks, threats on lives and attempted kidnappings of community members who have been organizing against the El Dorado gold mine. Priest Luis Alberto Quitanilla was the victim of an attempted kidnapping and assassination in July. Also members of the community radio station, Radio Victoria, have been threatened by phone, text and mail since they began to be the voice for the resistance.

This new wave of violence that has befallen Cabañas has been linked time and again to Pacific Rim and their reactionary agents, however local police and the former Attorney General's office have called the incidents common crimes. The continued violence is leaving Salvadorans in a state of fear and frustration not only because of the nature of the violence but also because of the lack of action on behalf of their Attorney General's office and local law enforcement.

CISPES, the committee in solidarity with the people of El Salvador, is calling for US residents to sign on to a letter as organizations, and to email the Attorney General's office. Go to cispes.org for sample letters and the sign on letter, both available in Spanish and English.

Also stay up to date with the Olympia chapter of CISPES to participate this January in the third monthly call-in to the Pacific Rim Headquarters.

CISPES is the Committee In Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. Olympia CISPES can be reached at olycispes@gmail.com.

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In the White Building on 4th Avenue (across from the Reef and above Last Word Books) in Room 212. The entrance is to the right of Last Word Books. Our office is up the stairs, down the hall, and to the right.

They are currently accepting applications for internships. Areas of focus include:

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Their wish list:

- Medicine-making supplies
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- Books on herbal medicine, anatomy&physiology, herb/drug interactions, etc.

An "update" on John Towery

Army Continues To Not Comment On How It Infiltrated Anti-War Groups

Compiled by WIP News Service

This summer, *Works in Progress* published a series of articles about John J. Towery, Jr., who presented himself to numerous local anti-war organizations as "John Jacob." A military employee of Fort Lewis, Towery infiltrated these groups and gathered intelligence on their activities and members. He most prominently targeted Olympia Port Militarization Resistance, but also gathered information on King's Books in Tacoma, Students for a Democratic Society, and other activists in the South Puget Sound region. The story was subsequently featured on *Democracy Now!* and in *The New York Times*. An August editorial in *The Olympian* even demanded that the military prove that it is vigorously investigating Towery's activities. Since he was identified, Towery disappeared back to his real life with the military, which has stated in turn that an internal investigation is underway. Here is an update on that investigation.

In late November, local activist Brendan Maslauskas Dunn made a call to Fort Lewis inquiring about the status of the so-called investigation into John Towery's activities that the military and the fort claim they started after the news of the spy case went public. He talked with Fort Lewis spokesman Joseph Peik about the investigation and was told that the inquiry was still ongoing and the military wanted to make sure that it was "comprehensive and complete" in the endeavor until it goes public with its findings. Peik assured that once the military was finished, they would immediately go public. Peik refused to divulge any information about the investigation. Nothing about what department is investigating Towery, what exactly he is under investigation for, or when the investigation is expected to be over...which begs us to ask the question, is John Towery even under investigation?

One month later, and Fort Lewis still had no update on the investigation. When Olympia Copwatch representative Drew Hendricks talked to Army Public Affairs Specialist Catherine Caruso, she informed him that "we don't really have any updates on this." Indeed. Hendricks reports that she didn't hesitate and that she knew exactly what he was asking her about immediately, before she had a chance to hear him say more than who he was. She identified the investigation as "The Towery Investigation." She did mention that the investigation is a 15-6 and explained that this is also known as a Commander's Inquiry. The commander appoints an officer "with a legal background" from another department to conduct an investigation into the allegations. Whether another department than the Force Protection unit, or from her own Public Affairs unit was left to the imagination.

Hendricks reminded Caruso that he had broken the story of Towery's spying in the news media and that he had not been contacted by anyone from Fort Lewis about this investigation. He also reminded her that it was more than four months, since the story broke and the "investigation" began. He asked her whether she would like to forward his phone number to the investigating officer – and she declined, noting that she "(has) no way to contact that person." Interesting. Not having a name handy is one thing. Not having anyone she can email a phone number to is quite another. That fact, and the lack of a phone call to the person whose investigation revealed the behavior is rather telling. She did hand out her own email, so that we could send our concerns to her. It is the holiday season, after all.

On Dec. 28, *Works In Progress* asked Caruso for an update on the investigation. We received the following response:

Sir,
An investigation into allegations re: John Towery that were made at an Olympia City Council meeting is still ongoing. I don't anticipate any additional information becoming available from our office until that investigation is completed.
Fort Lewis [Public Accountability Office] does not have a photo of Mr. Towery (neither the Army, nor the installation, maintains "official photos" of most civilian employees).
FOIA requests can be directed to:
ATTN: FOIA OFFICER
BOX 339500 MS 85
FORT LEWIS WA 98433-9500
I hope this answers your questions.
Very respectfully,
Catherine Caruso
Fort Lewis Public Affairs Office
External Communications- Media Relations
Phone: 253.967.0147
Email: catherine.caruso@us.army.mil

Of course, this is against the Posse Comitatus Act, and is in other ways an astounding violation of our rights. But it won't matter if we just let it slide by. It's time to put some pressure on. They say they're "investigating" what happened? Good. Right before Mr. Dunn hung up the phone when he was talking to Mr. Peik, the Fort Lewis spokesman asked him in a nervous voice if he was going to post this all over his (nonexistent) blogs. The military, it seems, wants people to forget about this messy spy business and move on. They are always quick to act when they are supposedly 'protecting our freedoms' but they act a little embarassed that they were caught in the act of suppressing the very same freedom they ostensibly protect. The thing is though, people won't forget, and they can't. There is a national surveillance program still in place right now and there are other informants embedded among us – this according to the public documents which were released by the local government in the records request. Let's keep asking what exactly they're investigating, and what it is they've found out. Joseph Peik can be reached at **(253) 967-0148**. If he's a spokesman for the fort, then by all means, speak Joe, speak! After all, that is his job, right?

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